

## Presentation to the BAPE Commission Regarding the Proposed Landfill near Danford Lake

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I oppose the establishment of a landfill in the Danford Lake area, for reasons of fairness to the people who live and vacation there, for the preservation of this relatively-unspoiled environment, and because investing in a new landfill will counter efforts to deal more reasonably with waste material.

Dirt is something that is in the wrong place. My 7<sup>th</sup>-grade science teacher taught us this general principle of matter, which has been born out by the experience of my lifetime so far. If this project were to go through, and a giant landfill were to be established near Danford Lake, the result would be that many, many tons of dirt from all across the region would be mixed together and transported, at great expense and danger, to be deposited in the wrong way, in very much the wrong place.

That same teacher told us that the best way to clean up a mess was to not create it in the first place. In the case of the proposed landfill, the most effective way of maintaining the present unspoiled nature of this area along the Picanoc River is to NOT build a huge mountain of garbage there. Once contaminated, the water table, air quality, visual beauty can never be returned to their unspoiled condition.

People who live in cities may have a hard time believing that there are places where water in creeks is clean enough to swim in, water from wells is clean enough to drink, the air is not contaminated with smells of rotten food scraps mixed with industrial chemicals, where eagles are more common than seagulls. But such places do exist, and their continued existence is vital to the health and happiness, not only of those of us who live in such places, but those who live in cities as well. That is why city-dwellers often have cottages, or visit places such as Danford Lake; to get away from the noise, the pollution, the hustle and bustle, and to feel themselves a part of nature's world again. To take the least desirable elements of city life - the wasted material, the leftovers, the untouchable and unwanted dirt, and to mix and heap it up near waterways in the backyards of country folk, does a grave disservice to both populations.

It has been common knowledge for years - for decades - that overindulgence in material excess was leading us towards a crisis in dirt management. Our political leadership has dismally failed to stem this tide, to redirect the flow of waste to where it

can be used. The idea of hauling dirt by the truckloads out of the cities and towns, to dump it all where few people will see it, is a disincentive to positively deal with the issue; that we have dirt - stuff that's in the wrong place.

A MegaDump will give city people only temporary symptomatic relief. Danford Lake people will have their dreams of clean country living destroyed. Then, when the city people need a place to recharge their spiritual batteries, they will find that no such place still exists. The plastic flash of Casino World is no substitute for a canoe trip on the Picanoc, a hike to the lookout on Mont O'Brien, or a day spent in the garden; all things that one can do in Danford Lake AS IT IS NOW. All those activities would surely be diminished, if Danford Lake were to become the garbage dump of the Outaouais.

One way in which stuff becomes dirt, is when food waste and other organic leftovers are wrapped in plastic bags to be tossed out along with all manner of other waste. When this is taken to a huge garbage heap, buried and crushed, it festers and rots; this is how nature makes methane, and this is how garbage makes stink. Methane, in the right place, such as in a tank, is a valuable clean-burning fuel. In the wrong place, such as wafting up from a garbage heap, it is a smelly, poisonous contributor to global warming. So, for heaven's sake, let us begin by sorting and redirecting the stream of organic waste; it should be composted, to diminish the total garbage volume, and to alleviate the coming shortage of petrochemical fertilizers.

The non-organic leftovers of our so-called disposable lifestyle should be sorted near the place where the articles went from being necessary packaging or building material or old car parts to being dirt. Much of that stuff can be re-purposed, re-used or re-cycled. In the past, we should have; in the future, we must. The small amount of dirt that stubbornly remains in the wrong place can be transformed, through plasma gasification, into an inert and compact substance which can be used for road base construction. The cost of such sorting and processing will be cheap, compared to the final accounting for wanton destruction of rural landscape that a MegaDump will cause.

A MegaDump is such an inherently bad idea, that the people who would be most affected by the plan have necessarily been the least-consulted. The success of this scheme depended upon avoiding input from those who live nearest the proposed dump site and near the routes along which dozens of trucks will haul their unwanted payloads. Those people were misled from the start, with the notion that the project involved upgrading the local landfill, for local use. The mayor of Allevyn & Cawood must have known that the ultimate plan involved garbage from far beyond the municipality, as the Council of Mayors of Pontiac must have known that it involves opening the door to whatever garbage is out there looking for a home.

People in the city don't want a MegaDump nearby, even though the waste material belongs mostly to them. There are many good reasons for that. The promoter's engineers will only claim that the effects - the water pollution, the traffic noise, the ugliness - will be "minimal". Even they do not claim the dumpsite will be as good as it is now. It can't be. Why should the hopes and dreams of the people of Danford Lake be sacrificed, for the short-term convenience of urban Outaouais?

I urge the Commission to recommend that the Ministry reject this proposal, for the good of the Danford Lake area, as well as the ultimate good of the entire Outaouais.